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STATEMENT OF  
NATIONAL COUNCIL  
SOCIAL SECURITY MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATIONS, INC.

For the  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON FEDERAL SERVICES, POST OFFICE, CIVIL SERVICE  
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS  
U.S. SENATE

On S. 2140  
FEDERAL EMPLOYEES LEAVE BANK ACT OF 1988

March 18, 1988

The National Council of Social Security Management Associations, Inc. (NCSSMA) supports S. 2140, creating the Federal Employees Leave Bank.

Many of our members -- managers and supervisors in nationwide field offices and teleservice centers of the Social Security Administration -- know from experience that there are employees in need and generous co-workers wishing they could help. Applications on behalf of a number of Social Security employees were submitted to OPM for consideration for leave transfer during the first year's test program.

The Federal Employees Leave Bank Act will provide a welcome opportunity for federal employees to give a meaningful gift to their co-workers, by allowing the transfer of accrued annual leave from one employee to another. By permitting personal employee-to-employee leave transfers to continue within the framework of an agency-wide leave bank, S. 2140 ensures the program's success.

NCSSMA also commends S. 2140 for providing access to the Merit Systems Protection Board for any employee who is subjected to coercion in connection with the leave bank. We believe stringent safeguards are required to minimize the opportunity for any leave-sharing program to be abused.

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We have no objection to the limitations on sick and annual leave which may be accrued while a leave gift recipient is using donated leave. We also support the restriction on amounts of leave which may be donated by any one employee during a year. As supervisors and managers we know very well that federal employees -- and their families -- benefit greatly when they are able to get away from the demands of their jobs for a time. Work performance and effectiveness are also enhanced after a period of leave, so it is in the best interest of government operations as well as employees themselves to disallow donations of more than half of one's annual leave.

We also agree strongly that the program should be restricted to gifts of annual leave. The transfer of sick leave between federal employees creates several problems. Employees cannot foresee how great their own need for accrued sick leave may become, should illness or accident prevent them from working for an extended period of time. They and their families need the security of a sick leave reserve as insurance against the unexpected. In addition, there are restrictions on the use of sick leave by federal employees which, when applied to transferred sick leave, would make monitoring sick leave use by gift recipients administratively difficult.

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Annual leave has an immediate value to the employee -- it requires a generous decision to contribute annual leave to a co-worker. The same is not true for sick leave contributions. And the immediate costs of sick leave transfer would fall to the government rather than the individual. It would be extremely unfortunate if the cost factor of including sick leave jeopardized the future of the program.

Finally, we are concerned about the potential for abuse in a program such as this through misrepresentation on the part of applicants or collusion between an applicant and a leave donor. We believe that additional information and recommendations should be provided by the manager who supervises the applicant on the job. In this way, supervisory managers would be part of the selection process by providing verification of essential information concerning the applicant, the applicant's work and leave history, and the personal or family emergency which precipitated the need for additional leave. Either OPM or the Leave Bank Board at each agency could formalize the information gathering procedure and determine what questions should be asked of each applicant's supervisor.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit our comments and suggestions on S. 2140.